



—Sparklegilla 2012—

Sparklegilla Vol. 7

Table of Contents

A Short Story
by Matthew
Risher
pg 24

A Superhero
Laundry
Adventure
pg 30

Computer
Cooking
pg 10

Hobo
Saviors
pg 36

Spark-L-Bomb
pg 20

Cover Artist
Interview
pg 17

Jen Struckman
Photography
pg 6

And much , much more!!

My favorite 4 Weekend Trips from Cincinnati

by Jamie Shiverdecker

I am a huge fan of short weekend trips that require little to no time off from work. It is a great way to make the work week bearable. I have included below four of my favorite getaways for summer or winter.

1. Brookville Lake

This is a great place for a day visit or a weekend visit and only 45 minutes away. It is a beautiful lake with lots of hiking and a beach. Camping here is fantastic and relatively cheap at \$25 per night! For those of you who are not big on the outdoors, the campground does have modern restrooms and showers. If you are not a camper and want to stay overnight, there is a resort right on the lake. Sagamore Resort offers many amenities; rates are significantly higher at \$159-\$259 per night. They offer boat rentals as well even if you are not staying at the resort. This is one of my favorite summer weekend spots to camp, boat and have a great time with friends and family! There is also opportunity for tubing or canoeing down the river nearby. Visit <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/> for more information.

2. Hueston Woods

Yes, this is more outdoorsy activity...but, they offer many activities that you may not find elsewhere all within an hour's drive. For example, a full Frisbee golf course, paintball and a dog park. There is a campground available, but they also have an array of cabins and lodge rooms available. If you have a group of several friends going I would recommend a family cabin. The cabins feature the luxury of indoor living, but also a screened in patio and fire ring outside. Another bonus is all of the amenities of the lodge are available to those who are in cabins; this includes a swimming pool, game room and just an outright beautiful lodge atmosphere! There is also a lake here and you can rent anything from a pontoon to a kayak. For more information visit <http://huestonwoods lodge.com/>.

3. Gatlinburg

What I like to call the Hillbilly's Vegas. Within a four hour drive, this is one of my favorite cheap vacation places! There are so many ridiculous shows and places to visit, but my favorites include the vast array of mini golf and laser tag. In downtown Gatlinburg, the streets are lined with tiny shops that feature anything from air-brushed t-shirts to tiny porcelain piglets. Aside from the ridiculousness of it all there is also the Smokey Mountain National Park which is beautiful and includes miles and miles of hiking trails. Also, in downtown Gatlinburg is Ripley's Aquarium which is amazing! Depending on how much you are willing to spend there are hotels that range from \$50 to \$300, but there are also cabins available for rent all over in the mountains. Personally, I prefer to rent cabins through www.vrbo.com for the best rates. Visit <http://www.gatlinburg.com/> for more info.

4. Elk Creek Vineyards

Are you looking for a more relaxing weekend? Elk Creek Vineyards in Owenton, KY offers beautiful scenery and fantastic lodging. Did I forget to mention wine tastings and tours? They have summer concerts on an outdoor stage and indoor entertainment as well on weekends. There is an art gallery and an amazing lodge with a café and wine tastings in a relaxed environment. Lodging has a bed and breakfast feel and also features massages. This is all within an hour's drive so it is great for a day trip or an overnight trip. For more information visit <http://www.elkcreekvineyards.com/>.

Dustins Top 10

Free computer apps



Google Sketchup:
This is a great easy to use program for creating quick 3-D architectural models.



Blender:
A powerfull program for creating 3-D models of anything you can think of.



Gimp:
If you need a free alternative to Photoshop this is the program for you.



OpenOffice:
A nice free alternative to Microsoft Office.



HotSpot Shield:
A proxy program for temporarily bypassing network firewalls.



WinRAR:
For compressing or extracting multiple different file formats.



HWMonitor:
For monitoring your computers temperatures , power, and other usefull info.



FreeNas:
If you need an easy to use Network Attached Storage (NAS) device for storage and backups, then all you need is this program and an old pc with a sizable hard drive.



Knoppix:
This is a great linux based cd you can use if you need to troubleshoot a variety of computer problems.



Clonezilla:
An imaging/cloneing solution that works just about on anything.



So You Want to be a Creative?

Tips from one maker to another!

by Lindsey M Whittle

Art = exercise Would a professional basketball player enter onto the court without practicing first? I imagine he would practice constantly and daily, that's how he gets better. People often comment to me on how they wish they could draw? Well do you practice and train your eye everyday? Your pursuit of art should be like a disciplined practice of exercise.

Research art, concepts and creative people like a man with his head on fire looks for water. Anytime I immerse myself in research, especially art related research amazing artwork is the result. Researching creative people puts me in the zone, helps me push my concepts further, and validates the stuff I am making.

Say yes to opportunities. Getting your work out there is what matters. That's how people see it! So if you get offered to have your work in a show, even if the deadline seems close, sometimes it's good to say yes even if you have to push yourself. It can lead to more opportunities.

Be "Rudy" on your art. Like the movie "Rudy." He stopped at nothing to achieve his impossible goals. Decide what your creative goals are and stop at nothing to achieve them.

Make first think later. Sometimes people worry so much about whether or not they are making "art" that they don't make anything.

Don't worry about making "bad" art. Sometimes you have to make the bad art in order to get to the good art. When you look back at your work later that piece will make sense in the context of what came before and after it. You had to make it to get to the after part, even if you don't like it at the time. Usually "bad" art is a good starting point for something else.

Make stuff even if you don't understand what your making. Artists seem to always want to know why. Sometimes it will take years of working at something to understand why you are making it. Sometimes you have to make it first before you can begin to understand it. Don't let not understanding something slow you down.

Stand up for your work. Always listen to advice and opinions when given to, but at the end of the day, it's your work and it's your opinion that matters. Don't be afraid to stand up for what you are making. Have you ever made something that you love and everyone has something negative to say about it? Who cares! You are the maker, if you believe what you made was meant to exist and you love it, stand up for it, and don't let other people's opinions get you down.

What inspires you? Pay attention to every little thing that inspires and motivates you. The longer in life you make art the more you will start to connect the dots of your interests and it will help your work become more cohesive.

Don't be afraid to be you. Part of being an artist is about being sincere. You have a song to sing, don't be afraid to sing it, even if no one else's song is like yours. Rock it.

Ideas Matter. This one is SO important. Usually your ideas are smarter than you are. Write down all your ideas even if they seem crazy or impossible. Sometimes you can translate the over the top ideas into usable ideas, or you may just be able to pull off the impossible. Pay extra attention to repeating and persistent ideas, there is a reason they keep popping in your head. Most of my best work came from ideas that kept popping up in notes over and over again.

Make art about things you want to make art about. This is so important. Who cares if what you want to make isn't cool. If you aren't excited about what you are making, your viewers won't be excited about what they are looking at and you won't have a lot of motivation to finish the work. What ever gets you out of bed in the morning and makes you so excited you can hardly eat, make art about that.

Bacon

Painting!!!

We'll decorate
your bacon for
all your
party needs!

**1-800-paint-your-bacon
(1-800-72468-9687-22266)**

Jenn Struckman



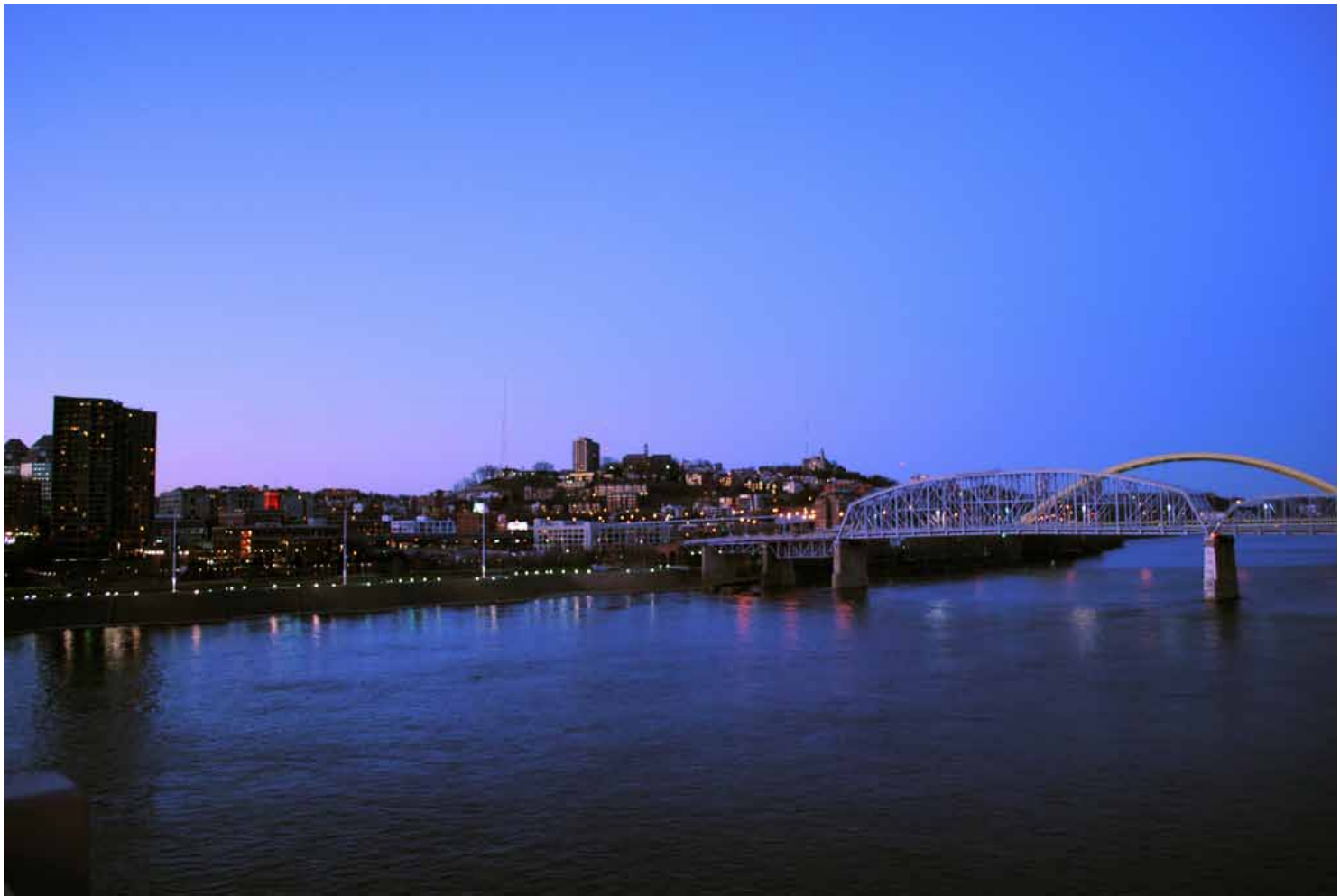
A 22 year old photographer and design student located in Cincinnati, Ohio. She has a large variety of professional experience including digital photography, web design and various visual arts.

<http://jlstruckman.com/> and <http://jlstruckman.tumblr.com>

Continued on pages 7,8,9









Computer Cooking by Ghost Face

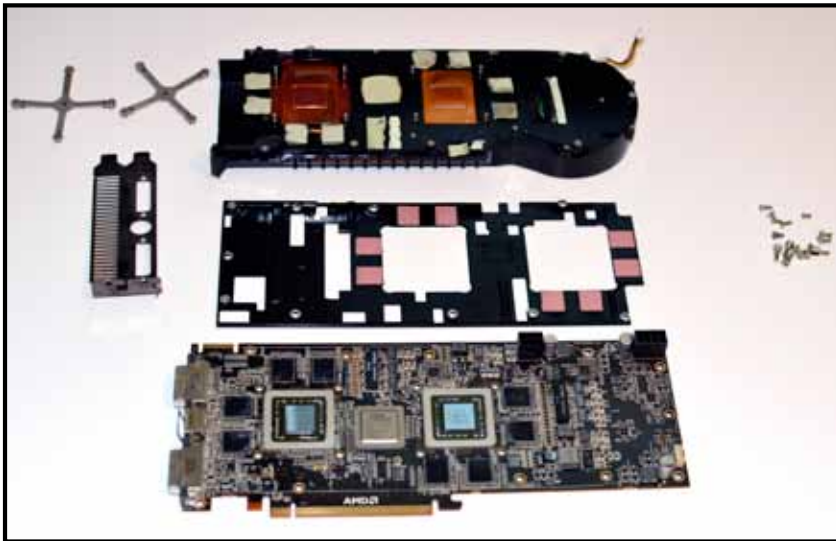


What to do if your discrete graphics card is not displaying video or if you have strange graphical artifacts on your computer screen. Before you attempt this make sure that your video card is out of warranty and that it is the video card that is defective and not another component of the computer. I won't go into detail about how to troubleshoot your computer in this article; this is for repairing a non-functioning graphics card. This technique is known as "solder re-flow" and can be used on many electronics, Xbox, PS3, motherboards, etc... Basically anything with a printed circuit board (PCB).

What is happening in this process? Electronics produce a lot of heat and need to be cooled properly if not their lifespan is limited. Some components can get so hot that the solder joining the circuits together starts to liquefy and become malleable. When these joints cool down they don't cool uniformly and leave minor fractures or cracks. Overtime this will just get worse and worse and lead to a dead part. The only way to fix this is to heat up the component until the solder joints start to liquefy and fill in the fractures and create solid joint once it's cooled. You have three outcomes when trying this fix. It could permanently fix the problem, provide a temporary fix, wherein you may need to do this again a couple of months down the road, or not work at all. It's meant to be a last ditch effort, where your only other option is to throw the card away. With that out of the way let's get started my pretties.



The first step in this process is to remove the heatsink from the board. How you remove the heat sink varies from card to card, but its fairly straight forward. Flip the card over and start removing all of the visible screws, sometimes a screw will be hidden under a sticker to signify that your voiding the warranty.



Taking the Card Apart:

Work your way around the card removing all the screws and finally remove the pci bracket. After all of the screws are removed you need to remove the heatsink. The thermal paste may cause the metal heatsink to “stick” to the processor, so be cautious when removing it. To avoid this you could take the card apart while it is still warm. Make sure to remember were all of the screws went because they will vary in size.

Preparing the Card:

After the heatsink has been removed you need to clean all of the thermal past off of the gpu's. You can use a non abrasive cloth and some isopropyl rubbing alcohol to wipe off the paste. You may want to wear gloves when removing the paste as it is metal. If there are any thermal pads left on any of the chips remove them and place them back on the heatsink. At this point the video card should look similar to the picture on the left. You don't want any wires or pieces of plastic on the board except for the power and fan connections. Now you need prep the card for baking. You need; An oven, a baking sheet, and some tin foil. Place a sheet of aluminum foil on the baking sheet. Roll up a couple of pieces of foil into little balls for the card to rest on. This will keep the connections from making contact with the aluminum sheet. Place the foil balls underneath the screw holes to avoid coming into contact with the solder joints.



Baking:

Start by preheating your oven to 350 degrees and opening some nearby windows. The smell can be a little overbearing so its best to have fresh air circulating. Once the oven is heated gently place the baking sheet inside. Cooking times may vary but generally you need to cook it for 9-10 minutes. You will know when the card is finished when the solder joints appear shiny and malleable. Once its finished let the card cool and reapply some thermal paste on the gpu and put the card back together and try it out.

How to pull AN All-nighter!

by Lindsey M Whittle

GUESS WHAT?



All-nighters are terrible.

No matter who you are you will feel horrible, because the fact of the matter is, your body needs sleep. But if you are like so many of us, where there just aren't enough hours in the day and what you are working on is more important to you than sleep . . . here are a few tricks for you:

1.

Don't get full. If you let yourself get too hungry you won't be able to focus, but if you eat until you are content, your body will start to digest food and you will get sleepy, you will be setting yourself up to get tired.

2.

Naps help. Your brain is like a computer. If you hit a wall where you are getting nothing done and making a lot of mistakes, it is probably time to take a two-hour nap and re-boot. You will get twice as much done than if you didn't. If you don't want to fall into too deep of a sleep. I recommend sleeping with the lights on, and setting multiple loud alarms. This prevents your body from falling into a deep rem cycle, but it is enough for your body to reboot some.

3.

Take exercise breaks. Exercise sounds horrible when you are tired, but a little adrenaline can go a long way when you are trying to stay awake. If you can't do 30 sit ups, then do 5. Dance, jump, run around your house etc. Just make sure you stop through out the night to get your blood flowing.

4.

Be excited . Be into what you are doing. If you are focusing on how tired you are and how you don't feel good, then you will get nothing done. Instead look at the big picture and remind yourself why you are pulling this all-nighter. This can give you the focus and motivation you need to get through the night. "YEA – I'M MAKING SOMETHING AWESOME, or THIS TERM PAPER WILL BE THE BEST ONE YET!"

5.

Be silly. Find little ways to make your all-nighter fun. Invite friends over to work with you, put on a funny outfit, listen to your favorite music while you work, take a midnight break and run to a 24 hr milk shake shop etc. If you are having fun it will distract you from your misery, and maybe insert a little joy into your work!

6.

Distract yourself. This one has to be broken down into 2 parts. 1. If you are making something like art or clothes etc. all night, then put on an epic book on tape or intense movie, so that you distract yourself from how you feel, but you are still working. 2. If you are working on academic work like a paper or studying etc., then go to an all night coffee shop or something like it study. This way, you will not be tempted by your bed, and you will have access to coffee and pie all night long.

7.

Instant coffee. Instant coffee and red bull are quick fixes – they probably won't get you through the night. If you feel like you are about to dose where you are working, you can give yourself a kick with extremely caffeinated beverages. This writer mixes large quantities of instant coffee powder with foods she loves like ice cream etc. – in order to make the large packed quantity of horribly tasting caffeine tolerable. Another option is to chug a red bull and exercise at the same time. Both of these actions are hard on your body and it may make your heart beat really fast. If you have any health risks you should not try this one and you shouldn't do it all the time, only if you are really under a deadline and no time.

The Best Movies to Watch During an All-nighter.

Lord of the Rings Return of the King extended
Independence day
The Dark Knight
The Fifth Element
Speed Racer
Armageddon
Power Rangers the Movie
Star Trek 2011
Harry Potter Deathly Hallows part 2
V for Vendetta
Thor

TOP
Ekvens

the
FINE
PRINT
↓

Don't watch a movie you haven't seen! Then you will watch the movie and not work.

Do pick movies that excite you, and are action, adrenaline-pushing movies.

Do watch movies that motivate you.

Don't watch movies that bore you, it might put you to sleep.

Don't watch foreign movies, because you will have to read them.

Did

you

Know?

Dustin
is an
all-nighter pro too!

Here is his take
on how to survive a night of

none sleeping!

Pulling all-nighters can be very difficult; here some of the things that help me stay up through the night. First things first I always make sure my refrigerator is stocked with Gatorade and caffeinated drinks. I almost always have some type of noise in the background to break the silence. Most of the time I listen to music, I usually listen to music that has a lot of energy and makes me want to move around. Sometimes I will put in a movie or two in the background, but I found that I'm a lot more productive if I'm just listening to music. It's important to take breaks every once in a while and exercise for a few minutes to keep blood flowing and to give your brain a break and clear your thoughts. What not to do. Don't make yourself comfortable, don't laydown for a minute and tell yourself that you will just rest for 5 five minutes. As soon as you make yourself comfortable it will become difficult to get back to work and you will fall asleep. You will reach a point where you become so tired that I may seem impossible to stay awake. But fear not this will only last about an hour or so, once you overcome this "wall" pulling an all-nighter becomes much easier. Think of it as getting a second wind, all of a sudden you will become less tired and staying up all night working becomes less challenging.

Top 10 songs to listen to while pulling an all nighter.

- *Earth Hour Club Mix
- *Pressure Ken Loi rRemix - Grube and Hovsepien
- *Cascada - Everytime We Touch Club Mix
- *Flying (C-systems Vocal Mix) Vol.7
- *In Boundless Light (Original Vocal Mix) Vol.7
- *Disarm Yourself (Club Mix) Dash
- *Berlin Vol.8
- *Backwards 7 Baltic Vol. 8
- *Scooter – Nessaja
- *Scooter the Logical Song
- *At Last... T+Pazolite Power Raise
- *Ahead on Our Rave – Advent
- *Final Fantasy DJ

zzzzzzzz

zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

zzzzzzzzzz

Vote for your favorite "Zilla" look
and it might just get made for the
next issue of Sparklzilla!!

7.



4.



3.

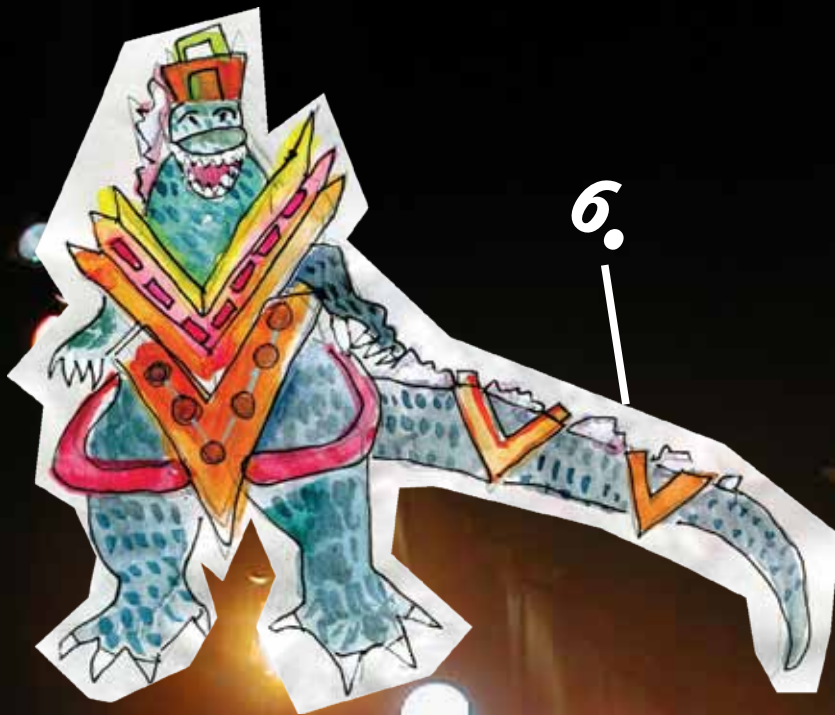


2.



5.





6.

Design your own
"Zilla" look here!



SEND DRAWINGS AND VOTES TO SPARKLEZILLAMAGAZINE@GMAIL.COM

Interview with Cover Artist:

Chaz Chew

SZ: Please state your full name for us:

CC: Charles Alabaster Chew, but everyone calls me Chaz. If I were about to walk in front of a bus, and someone shouted "Charles, the Bus!" I would die.

SZ: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your art process?

CC: I am a very eclectic being. I am obsessed with Food, Fashion, Vintage, Tattoos and Nekked. All of which can be found in my work. My artistic process is as scatter-brained as I can be, and just as OCD. I work almost exclusively with Ink and Watercolor, and I am very detail oriented. My execution can be tedious, but also a means to relieve stress, shocking.. I know.

SZ: Can you define yourself using three words?

CC: Charming, Inspired (to be, but also to evoke), and Demanding (of both myself and others)

SZ: If you had a "theme song" that played whenever you walked into a room full of people, what would it be?

CC: A musical score from either *Memoirs of a Gay Chew...* I mean, *Geisha*, or the scene from *Marie Antoinette* when she is touring Versailles for the first time and the chandeliers are tinkling and junk. If you saw my personal space, you would understand.

SZ: How do you get into the creative zone?

CC: I go through waves of Inspiration. These can sometimes last weeks or months, and then there's a period of just being, and not creating. When I am sitting down to nest and make some art yo, I usually like to have a bottle of wine, something salty, and a series of movies that I could probably recite from beginning to end playing in the background. Something I can enjoy without giving it my full attention. I don't, have a studio space per say, but my personal space is just dripping with my pretty and sparkly useless junk, and that makes me happy.

SZ: What are some things/people that inspire you?

CC: I draw inspiration from every extreme. I have a passion for Japanese Culture, Art and Cuisine (SushiSlut). I take traditional Japanese stylized Art and put my own sChway spin on it. I love the colors and textures, textiles and ceremonies of Asia. At the other end of the spectrum, I am hugely enamored with the Victorian Era, and anything Antiquated. Charles Dana Gibson was one of my most influential Illustrators. I started by copying his ink techniques and eventually developed my own distinct style. I am also hugely influence by the works of Alfonse Mucha. His work is breathtaking.

SZ: What are your top 5 favorite movies?

CC: TOUGH question. Here are my top 5 as of this particular moment. Amelie, (The music and language really melts my butter) Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Donny Darko (I know it sounds cliché for an art student to say, but it's the truth), Girl Interrupted (I can deeply relate to those trainwrecks, face it, we all can) and Anything Pixar. That list, however, is spur of the moment and circumstantial. Don't Judge Me.

SZ: What are your 5 least favorite movies? CC: I don't like this question.

SZ: What is one thing you would like to accomplish in your lifetime?

CC: I am actually moving to England this Fall to get my Masters Degree at Lincoln University in Lincolnshire and that is really a huge goal that is swiftly becoming realized. Upon graduating, I really feel as though anything I can imagine is possible. And I have a wildly vivid imagination. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought" –Buddha, and I believe in that strongly.

SZ: If you were abducted by aliens would you tell anyone? Y/N

CC: Good question Lindsey, very provocative. I think if that were to possibly happen, that yes I would probably have to tell my closest friends, they'd most likely believe me. Plus, it would be an Epic story. Or I would have to just Eternal Sunshine the hell outta myself, especially the exploratory probing portion of my brain.

SZ: Can you describe something you really cherish to us?

CC: Honestly, I have this gorgeous cat named Dina Boo Wilhemina Chew, and she is so precious to me. She is 10 years old and has been a constant in some of the hardest parts of my life.

She was found in a paper bag, and I have had her since she was little enough to sit on my shoulder wherever I went. I know every pet owner says this, but there is, literally, no other cat like her. I will probably miss her more than my family when I move abroad.

SZ: Any thoughts or advice you would like to share with our wonderful Sparklezilla readers?

CC: I can already tell that everyone reading this has a great head on their shoulders for subscribing to SparkleZilla. I could go on about being original and staying true to yourself first, but you all already know all about that. However, if there is one thing I have learned in my life, and know it always to be true, it is that it never hurts to be Kind. So I will leave you with that.

To contact Chaz send an email to Sparklezillamagazine@gmail.com

Now that you've read Chaz's interview, we want to interview you!!

Have you ever met anyone famous? If so – tell us about it

What is that one thing that you really should throw away, but probably never will?

What is your favorite item of clothing? Why?

What brings you joy?

What is your relationship to color?

List a gift that you were given that you will never forget:

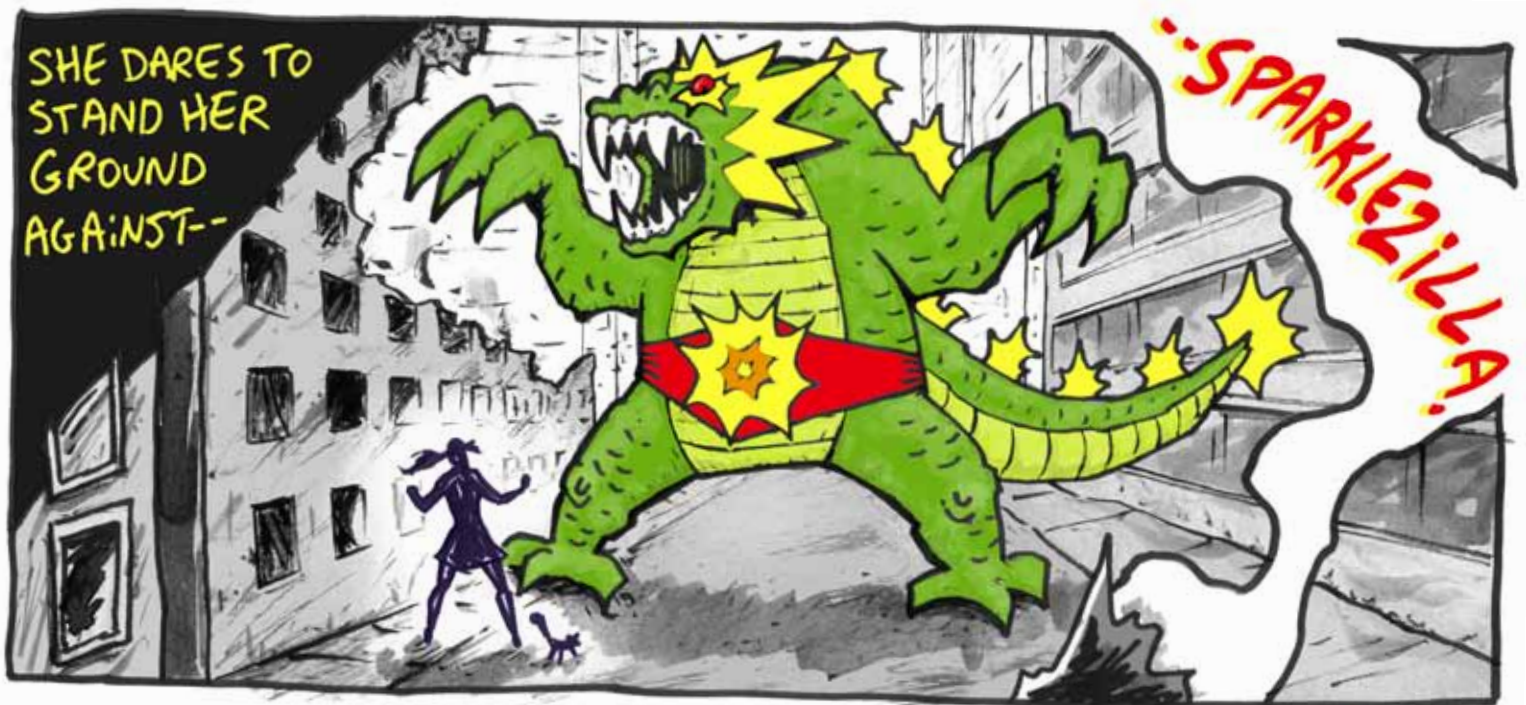
What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

If you were to perform in the circus, what would you do?

Send your answers to Sparklezillamagazine@gmail.com.
Watch the SZ blog for your editors to answer these questions too!
Do you have any questions for your Sparklezilla Editors?
Email those with your interview answers!!

SPARK-L-BOMB★TM

CREATED,
WRITTEN, And DRAWN by:
CLINT BASINGER



Panel 1.



Panel 2.



Panel 3.

--BUT...

... INSIDE
SPARKLEZILLA'S
CHOMPERS...



Panel 4.

...THE PERFECT FORMULA OF SPUNK, BEAUTY, AND...



Panel 5.

...SPARKLEZILLA-SALIVA HAS CREATED SOMETHING NEW...



Check out: CosmicMoustacheComics.com

Thursday, March 1st, 2192

Wilhelm Primary School, Winehair City, Animus IV

A short story by Matthew Risher

One of the most breathtaking sights was when the Animus star crested the top of Weatherly Canyon.

The brilliant, white main-sequence star rested at the very heart of the Animus Cluster. Its powerful light had to pass through the brightly colored gasses surrounding Animus IV, which had come to be known as the ‘Nubes de Aegis.’ From Weatherly Canyon, the star’s first pass over the northwestern horizon cast beams of purple and pink at an ever-shifting angle upon the opposing canyon wall. It was rumored that if one spent enough time lingering between 8:30 and 10:00 in the morning hours, the colorful rays of starlight would creep down along the southeastern walls in such a way that it actually made you smarter.

Which is exactly what Brey Windham was doing, rather than being in class.

She sat perched on a large rock, which rested in a shadowy corner between the school’s curved, observatory wall, and the long study hall used by the fifth- and sixth-year students. An impossibly large sketchbook lay across her spindly legs, and with a youthful sort of furious reverie she cast an impression of the distant, craggy walls beyond, with nothing more than a fenrock pencil.

Winehair City was nestled within one of Weatherly Canyon’s wider spaces. It had been settled by a troupe of vintners in the year 2137, which had discovered a unique breed of small trees, indigenous to Animus IV. Finding these colorful, furry fruits to make a most excellent refreshment when properly fermented, they named it the winehair plant. The entire region was filled with lush vegetation such as this; unlike anything the human race had ever seen.

“Young Miss Windham!”

Only seven years of age by way of the Mother Calendar, Brey had found herself to be quite the artist. A rush of annoyance struck her; understandably so, when she caught her name being called out by one of the teachers.

“Young Miss Windham! There you are!”

Brey peered past her stenciled masterpiece and scowled when Mrs. Ealom spotted her. She quickly and rebelliously turned back to her sketchbook, only to scratch in the shading of her Weatherly Canyon with renewed vigor.

“An impossibly large sketchbook lay across her spindly legs, and with a youthful sort of furious reverie she cast an impression of the distant, craggy walls beyond, with nothing more than a fenrock pencil.”

“Young Miss Windham, what are you doing?” cried Mrs. Ealom. “You’re missing Science and Technology!”

With a dramatic sigh, Brey stowed the fenrock pencil into the binding of her sketchbook and gave the teacher a frown. “But I don’t care about science and technology!”



Mrs. Ealom crouched near so that she might inspect Brey's work. She smiled brightly and gently ran a finger across the parchment's edge. "Oh, Brey. One day, I expect your art will be displayed throughout the entire galaxy. It's so wonderful!"

Brey peered at the teacher speculatively, but she couldn't help imagining such a thing. It brought a whimsical grin to the edge of her face, and she nervously twirled at her platinum hair with a spare finger.

"But class is just as important, especially at your age!" Mrs. Ealom stood and put out her hand expectantly. "Come now. We have two most special guests, and I don't want you to miss their arrival!"

"Oh, fine." Brey closed up her sketchbook and took Mrs. Ealom's hand while leaping to her feet. As she was led back toward the school's closest entryway, she looked up at Mrs. Ealom with a question in her eyes. "You really think it's that good, Mrs. Ealom?"

The teacher stopped for a moment, looking down with pride. "Of course, I do." She tugged at Brey's hand with renewed vigor. "Come on! Hurry!"

* * * * *

After seeing young Brey Windham to her assigned seat, Mrs. Ealom rushed over to the side of the gathering hall. There, she stood on the balls of her feet while the school's headmaster, Enrique Arias, announced the arrival of their special guests.

They were officers from the Freedom Coalition Space Fleet, here on shore leave from operations in the dangerous Terran Region of the galaxy, close to Earth. The man was a Lieutenant Commander named Rashid Jallaq, and he served aboard the Coalition Space Corvette Lilith's Omen, as her Chief Engineering Officer. Clearly of Middle Eastern heritage, his face seemed to light up with refreshed joy upon joining the gathering hall, which was filled with a mounting chorus of chatter.

The woman who followed was one of Jallaq's shipmates, a younger woman named Jane Veston. A Communications Officer ranked Ensign; Mrs. Ealom guessed that she couldn't have been much more than twenty-two years of age, M.C. Veston carried herself awkwardly, peering around at all of the children with an uncomfortable smile on her pale face.

Headmaster Arias raised his hand to settle the crowd; the youngest of the first and second year students had been jumping up and down, trying to get a good look at the visiting heroes. Still, they regarded their Headmaster with a great respect. With his simple gesture they reluctantly settled back into their seats, though many had to stifle their exhilaration with quiet fidgeting.

Arias chuckled and turned to face the officers directly. "What a warm welcome we've all given you!"

Jallaq bowed to the Headmaster, pressing his hands together in a sign of deep respect.

"Now, listen well, students. Lieutenant Commander Jallaq and Ensign Veston are here on what is called 'Shore Leave'. It's sort of like the solstice break, but for space people."

A chorus of giggles trickled through the room. One young voice spoke accidentally too loud; "I like solstice break!"



“Don’t we all,” joked the Headmaster.

“Now, you’ll raise your hands and wait to be called on before asking any questions. Only one question, please, so think long and hard about it before you speak!”

The room was filled with muddled responses, ranging from disappointed awww’s to muttered okay’s and reluctant yes, Headmaster’s. Then, without waiting for further permission, a slew of hands shot up into the air all about the hall, many of them shaking anxiously. The Headmaster chose his first student, a young boy who stood up and excitedly spewed out his question.

“Why are your first names so weird?”

Rashid chuckled and turned to face his accuser. **“Well, those aren’t our first names. We call them ranks. They are titles, and help to organize the way we do things. It’s just like how you refer to your Headmaster as ‘Headmaster’, or your teachers as ‘Mister’ or ‘Misses.’”**

The Headmaster chose another student, a third-year girl named Zoe Tripp.

“What do your names mean?”

“Well,” answered Rashid, “My title is ‘Lieutenant Commander’. It’s a junior level command rank. I run the Engineering Section of my starship, which means I have to make sure it’s always working, never broken.” His eyebrows shot up in mock exasperation. **“It’s a very difficult job!”** Then, he turned to look at the woman beside of him with an expectant grin. **“Ensign?”**

Jane Veston fumbled at her cuffs for a moment, as if being put on the spot made her feel quite awkward. She cleared her throat, and then spoke with a distinctly accented dialect of British origin. **“Well, um, my rank is Ensign. It’s a pretty typical rank, really. Most officers have the rank of Ensign. It’s, well, really quite standard, I should say.”** She looked over at Jallaq with a silent plea.

“Now, you’ll raise your hands and wait to be called on before asking any questions. Only one question, please, so think long and hard about it before you speak!”

“Of course, Ensign Veston’s work is very important to the Lilith’s Omen,” Rashid added. **“She is our Communications Officer. She makes sure that our ship talks to the other ships, without letting the bad guys nose in. She’s also quite smart with computers! Perhaps the most brilliant hacker in the galaxy.”**

Another student stood up when called upon. **“Could she hack into my daddy’s computer, so I can find out what he’s gotten me for my birthday?”**

The whole room chuckled, even many of the teachers. As for Jane, she gasped.

“Wh- well, no, that would be completely inappropriate, not to mention illegal!”

“What is space like?” asked another student.

“Well, it’s very cold,” answered Rashid. He looked straight at Jane and folded his arms, leaving the floor to her.

“Y, yes,” stammered Jane. **“Very cold, and dangerous. We can’t travel through space without the starship, so we have to make absolutely sure that we don’t do anything wrong.”**

“There are many rules we have to follow,” added Rashid, **“but they are for our own good. They keep us safe.”**

Without warning, one of the students asked a question that made everyone else go frighteningly silent.

“Have you ever killed a bad guy?”

Jane and Rashid exchanged pensive looks; neither of them was particularly excited about answering that question, but they each half expected that it would have come up sooner rather than later.

Rashid found himself tongue-tied, so Jane stepped in.

"No," she answered. "Neither of us have been put into that position, but that's because it's not our job to do that."

"We don't really see the bad guys," added Rashid, quietly. "There are other people who have to see them, and it's not a fun job to be sure."

The child stayed, indignantly. There was a frown on his face, and his eyes looked fearful. "My mom and dad say the bad guys have to die. Mom says we must always be afraid, because the bad guys are looking for us."

Looking at the child, Rashid was grief stricken. A boy so young shouldn't have to know so much about war. He walked over toward the student and knelt down to put himself on the boy's level.

"What's your name?"

"Michael. Michael Francis."

"Well, Michael Francis. Yes, there are bad guys, and they are very mean." He looked into the child's eyes with confidence while he tried to come up with the appropriate words to explain it all. The Freedom Coalition had been at war with the Civil Triumvirate since 2135. Fifty-seven years of war, while not constant and certainly indirect, was a long time for a culture to fear such a terrible and strong enemy. How could he explain it all in such a way that Michael Francis would understand? Was it even possible?

"But no, Michael," said Rashid. "The bad guys are never going to find Animus. That is why we do what we do. They don't like us, like a bully doesn't like those he picks on, so it's our job to protect you from the bullies."

"By killing them," whispered the boy.

"Sometimes, yes." He laid a hand on Michael's shoulder. "But only when every other option has been utterly lost. And believe me, it's not easy... but it makes me very proud to see you and your friends safe, here, on Animus."

There was nothing else he could have said. Rising, Rashid joined Jane again, who stood looking wide-eyed at the crowd of students.

Hands kept rising, and the questions once again became far less severe. Some of the students asked silly questions, like whether starships can really think like people, or if they had bathrooms in space. Others exercised their young intellects, asking how jump nodes worked, or how computers could talk to each other from one side of the galaxy to the other.

But as for Brey Windham, she wasn't nearly as interested in the questions or the answers. Paying little attention to the words spoken, she had instead retrieved her scrapbook and fenrock pencil. Furiously she scrawled angular lines, patches of shading, and brilliant curves into the thick and ruddy paper her mother had chosen for her. Every so often, she looked up and squinted at the students around her, the Headmaster, the teachers as they stood in a line across either wall. But most of all, she kept staring at the Officers of the Freedom Coalition; the brave and wise Lieutenant Commander Jallaq, the awkward but wordy Ensign Veston.

At last, Brey stuffed her fenrock pencil into the pocket in her dress, crumpled up her sketchbook, and stuck her hand indignantly up into the air. The Headmaster, seeming surprised to see her joining in, lifted his chin and called her name.

"Young Miss Windham."

Feeling a surge of bravery, Brey steadied her nerves and leapt to her feet. She scampered down the aisle way between her third-year classmates and the younger second-year students, until she was at the very front of the room. Gulping, she crept toward Jane Veston, looking up at her with eyes so wide. She bit her lip and, without saying a word, unfolded her sketchbook and held it out toward Jane.

All the while, Jane watched with an awkward curiosity as the young girl approached. Utterly perplexed, she took the sketchbook in hand and opened it to a place Brey had marked with her pinkie. When she saw what Brey had created, a gasp of wonder escaped her. She'd never seen such raw beauty played out in shades of brown; she'd never seen herself portrayed in such a brilliant manner. A small mirror hung on the wall of her quarters aboard Lilith's Omen, and a lackluster headshot was attached to her military file with the Coalition Space Fleet. Until that day, those were the only two places she'd ever seen her own face, and she never took the time to explore her own inner beauty. No, she'd been caught up in war since the time of her youth, having escaped re-assimilation at the hands of brutal Triumvirate agents when she was not much older than Brey.

The drawing clearly depicted the assembly hall in which they'd gathered. The mass of students resembled something like a blurry blob, out of focus, with shapes just distinguishable enough to be heads. The lines of teachers were similarly drawn, as was the Headmaster, who stood to the right of Jane and Rashid while they answered the students' questions. Even the walls, the floor, the windows and the draperies of the hall were drawn in angular abstract.

The drawing of Jane stood with her hands clasped before her, echoing the awkward way in which she stood before so many young strangers; but there was an astounding level of detail in her face, her eyes, the way her raven black hair fell in thin waves over her cheeks.

But for Jane and Rashid, she had etched them out in fantastic detail. She'd drawn them larger than life; as if they were superheroes sent from some dimension beyond, to serve and protect the free people of Animus and the Coalition colonies. In the drawing, Rashid stood high and proud, with one arm hooked against his belt like some kind of swashbuckler.

The drawing of Jane stood with her hands clasped before her, echoing the awkward way in which she stood before so many young strangers; but there was an astounding level of detail in her face, her eyes, the way her raven black hair fell in thin waves over her cheeks.

Looking at herself, Jane thought of herself as beautiful. She pictured herself as some kind of fairytale princess-turned-warrior, with a sword at her side and a shield of brilliant pearls.

Consumed with an emotion she was not too familiar with, she knelt down before the young girl, too stunned at first to speak.

“She pictured herself as some kind of fairytale princess-turned-warrior, with a sword at her side and a shield of brilliant pearls. ”



Brey scuffed her foot and clenched her hands together, fraught with hesitation. "Do you like it?" she asked. "I made it for you."

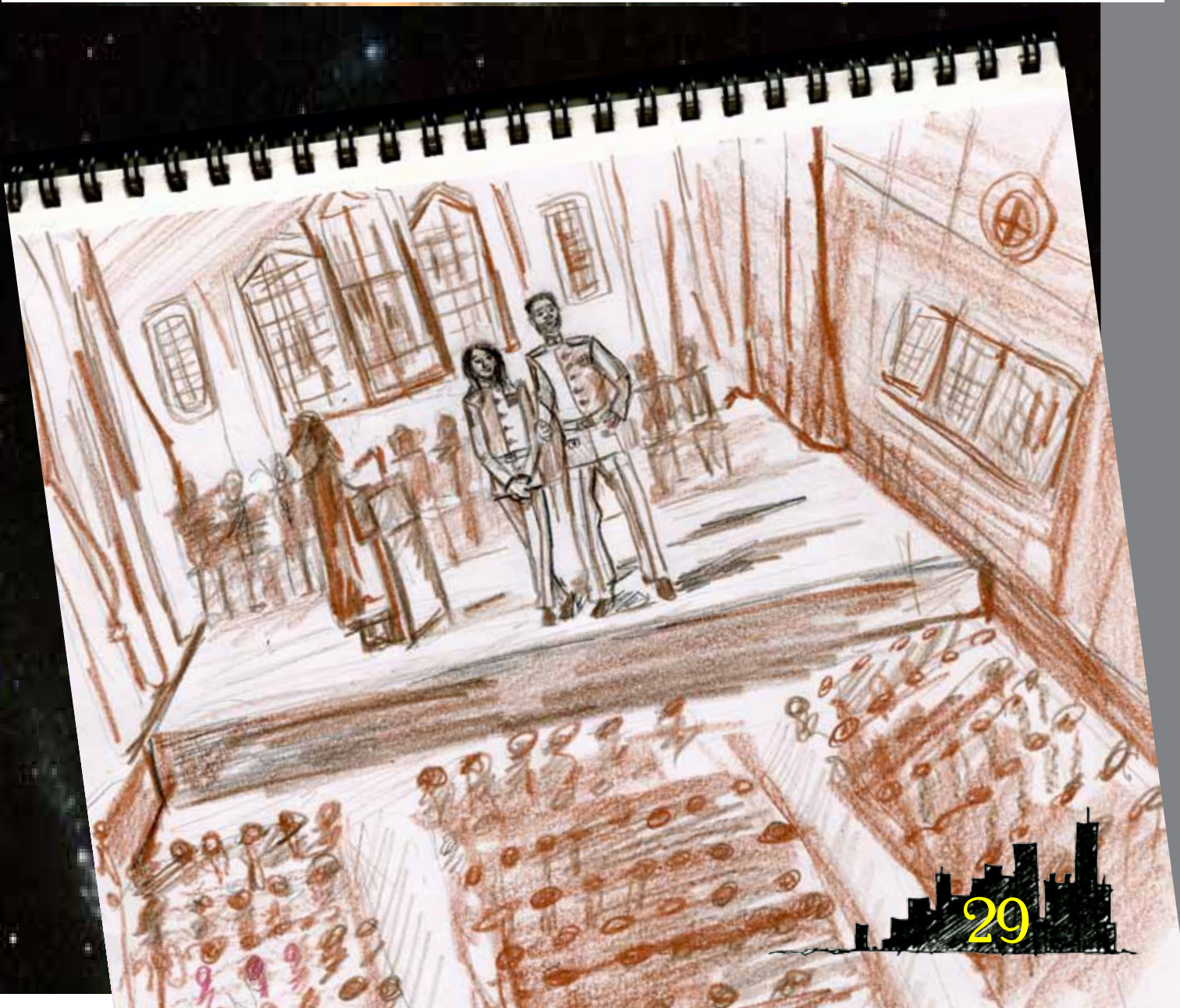
With a slow and earnest nod, Jane answered in a voice that was almost a whisper. "Yes, yes I do. It's absolutely breathtaking."

With an awkward smile, Brey reached out and shoved the sketchbook right into Jane's chest, almost forcefully. "You can keep it," she whispered. "So you can remember Animus when you're flying in the stars, fighting the bad guys."

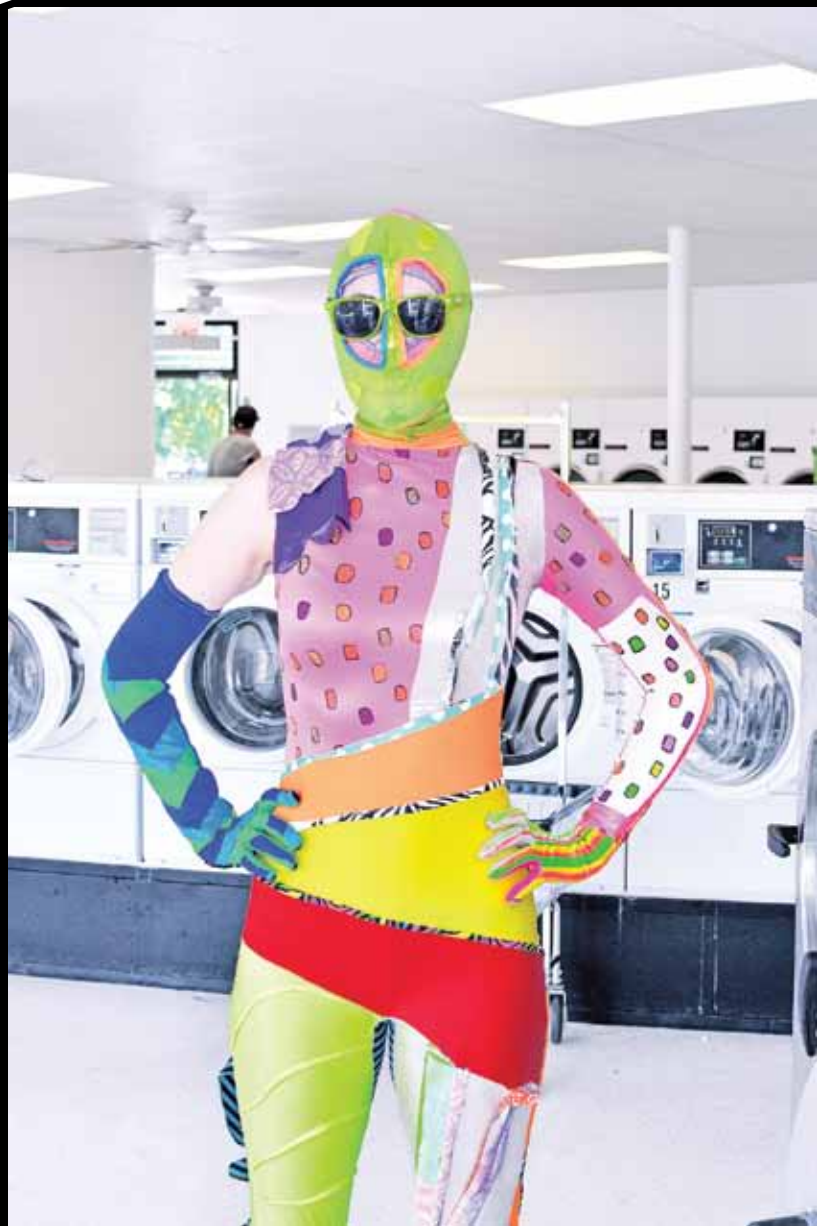
Ashen with the most profound sense of unexpected humility, Jane looked down at the sketchbook. It was worn around the edges among the many pages Brey had already used up, but the others were left blank, with so much room for the young girl's story to be completed. She tucked the sketchbook under her arm, as if it were more precious than gold. Then, she took Brey's hands in her own, her eyes glistening.

"I will draw some things for you," whispered Jane. "So you can see all of the wonderful places I've been."

And that was how Brey Windham, a young girl of the free world Animus, became pen pals with one of the greatest heroes in the known galaxy.



What Happens
when a super hero
has no clean clothes!?!?!



An All New, All Clean, Laundry Time Adventure!!



I will get you laundry faux!



Take that shirt of doom!!



"Ring Ring"



"What!? No I can't talk now I'm in the middle of an important mission!"



I must help!

But my laundry is not done!
NOOOOO!



Will it ever finish?



Stand down
Laundry!
You will not defeat
me this day!



At last!
Victory is mine!
I live to fight
another day
laundry villain!

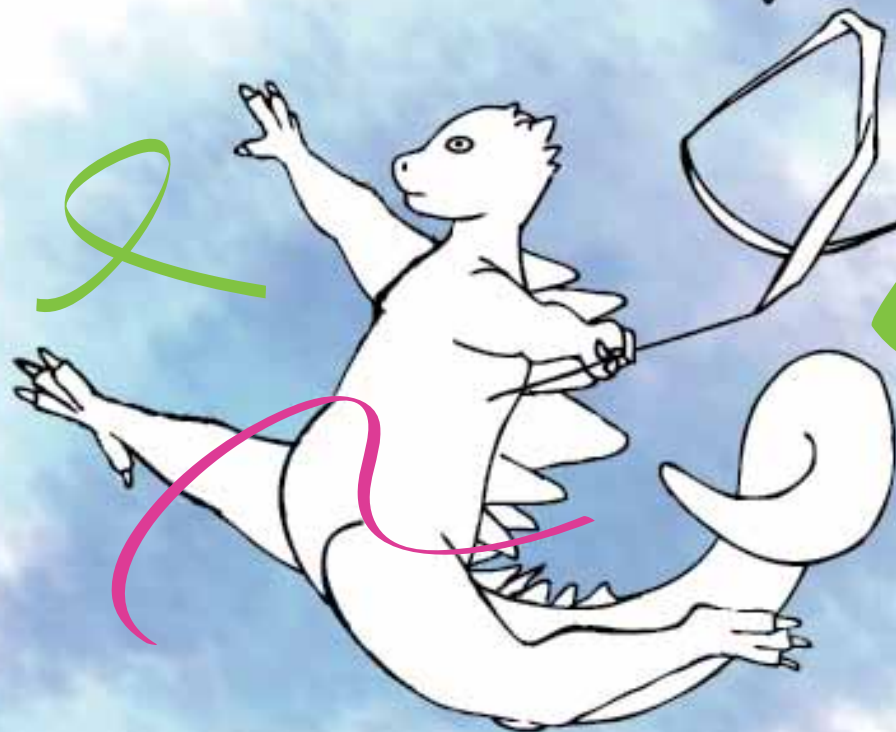


Today
laundry!
Tomorrow
the world!
Up and away!

SparlikeZilla

olympics

Badminton!!!



Rhythmic
Gymnastics



Dreams...

by

CRAIG STEELE

Towards the end of January in 2012 I started having some problems with anxiety. It caused me to stay up late most nights and even started to manifest in the form of heart palpitations and panic attacks. I was concerned about the symptoms I was having so I asked my neighbor if I could sleep on her couch so she could keep an eye on me. Let me back up and tell you we live in a multi-family house and I used to live in her apartment and like it very much. It had been many months since I actually slept in that apartment. Her son has a small lap dog, Jasper, that is quite affectionate and Jasper decided he would lay on the couch with me. The dog was soft and free of "doggy" odors so it was pleasant and soothing to pet him as he lay next to me. I remember the couch was quite comfortable. The kind that one sinks into making it difficult to escape. The son called Jasper into his room for bed and I was left alone to drift off to sleep. I don't recall having much trouble falling asleep even with a lamp and television still on.

Typically I toss and turn and wake a number of times throughout the night. This night, I must have slept quite soundly because I awoke in the same position as when and where I fell asleep. It was what I estimated to be just before dawn because it was still dark. The lamp was still on but the TV was turned off. As I lay there, I was startled by a familiar figure in the living room that I soon recognized was not my neighbor or her son. It was my grandfather! He stood there buttoning his shirt and greeted me as he did every morning when I lived with him years ago. Suddenly a cat jumped down from the back of the couch onto me. It was a cat that looked very similar to a cat I used to have and sadly had to put down. My neighbor does not own a cat and my grandfather is in a nursing home. At this point, I started to come to the realization that it was a strong possibility that I did not make it through the night. How horrible, I thought. I died on my neighbor's couch and she is going to wake up and find me there. I felt terrible for her. I looked at my phone and saw that people were trying to call and text me. I could see the missed calls of family and friends but when I would attempt to answer, I would here a message saying the phone was out of range. How strange I thought, my grandfather was alive when I left him. Maybe he took a turn for the worst. He was quite old.

I began to explore the apartment and found that there were subtle changes. Most of all the features I loved about the apartment, the house, were no longer there and everything was dated and in disrepair. It looked how I would imagine it looked prior to the home's renovation before I bought it. I was sure that I had died in my sleep and was now in another realm. But where was I? I could see through the windows that dawn was coming so I ventured outside in hopes to find the answer. I went out back to see if my car was there and it was gone as well. I loved that car but I suppose I couldn't take it with me. The neighborhood was different and the sky was alien. As I looked upward, I saw constellations nebulae I didn't recognize as well as stars and planets in every color of the rainbow. Strangely, I was at peace with my new situation I found myself in, yet anxious to know what this new existence meant. I remembered the missed calls and thought about all those I left behind and felt heartbroken for the pain and heartache they must be experiencing due to their recent loss of me. My pain and concerns for the life I left behind was over.

I noticed a truck rounding the corner and recognized it and a contractor I used to do work so I ran out to greet him. The man than exited the vehicle was not the contractor I presumed, but favored him greatly. Maybe a deceased brother or cousin? He confirmed my assumption that I had passed during the night and my grandfather had passed as well. "So am I to spend eternity accompanying Papa?" I asked. I spent my early years with him as he made his rounds. Fond memories, I thought. I can live with that. He didn't answer. We traveled down the unfamiliar road on foot until we reached the house next store. More familiar faces. My grandmother and great aunt and their significant others were on the porch and in the living room with the front door and windows open. I noticed the men were mangled as if they had died violently. I called out to my grandmother but she did not respond. She was half naked speaking in tongues bouncing on a bed in the front room of the house. "Why do they looked like that?", I asked the man from the truck. He told me they choose to look that way.

We continued down the road. Now the neighborhood was nothing at all like the one I left behind. Homes were old, dilapidated and the road was more dirt than paved. The sky remained alien, dark like the night but full of shooting stars, rotating galaxies with red, orange, green and blue planets. They all looked so close I could reach them. Where was I? Although the sky looked like the night, it was clearing well into morning as we walked on. I began to notice people where following us. Hungry, desperate people. I fell behind to confront them. I noticed they were all carrying cleavers and knives or broken bottles. "You wanna f*** me up, huh?!" I exclaimed, ready to fight. Just then, a police car pulls up with lights flashing but no sirens. The officers exit the cruiser and proceed to an adjacent residence, paying no attention to the thirsty, swarming mob. I look back and cannot see the man from the truck or my grandfather. The crowd closes in and I prepare to defend myself, looking around for any nearby object I can use as a weapon. I notice a scrap of paper in my hand and nervously tear it. The man closest to me, only two or three paces away, extends his arms and index finger and states, "Twenty-two," gesturing towards the paper in my hand. I examine the paper I've torn and observe stamped seals with numbers. 20, 27, 23, 21... but no 22.

Suddenly I am catapulted from this alien realm back to my neighbor's couch and consciousness. I looked around and sit up to gain my bearings and confirm that I am back where I fell asleep the night before. I check my phone for missed calls and the time. No missed calls and it's 6:15am. My heart is pounding and all I can think of if my recent adventure and how unbelievably real it was. I seek to find meaning in the experience and all I can do is play it over and over again in my head. I have never had a dream like that prior or since but from it I have gained a new outlook on life and strive to make every day a new experience to learn from and enjoy. You never know where you might wake up after you close your eyes.





**Hobo Saviors
Comic
by Lucas Brown**









stormy
Day
Publishing™

yow





Ryan Bartoo is a fashion design student at the University of Cincinnati and is an advocate of beauty in all forms.



**Drawings
by Noah Brown**



About

the

Editors



Lindsey M. Whittle

Maker of stuff.

Lover of people.

Wannabe Superhero.

Stay tuned for her upcoming adventures at the School of the Art Institute Chicago.



Dustin Schleibaum

Walleter.

Builder of Things.

Write your own story starting off with this sentence:


A ninja, alien, space robot, wearing green polka dot sunglasses walked into an ice cream shop on a Wednesday afternoon and was surprised to find

WHaT wOUld YoUr vERsion
Of A NiNjA, AliEn, sPaCE RObOT
wEariNG GrEeN PoLkA DOt
SuNGLasSeS LoOk LiKe? DrAw
yOUrS hERe:

Don't
forget to
email that story to:
Sparklezillamagazine@gmail.com

What have your editors been listening to while working on Sparklezilla?

Transformers Dark of the moon – Original Music Score
Dash Berlin Top 15
The Hunger Games Soundtrack
Lady Gaga (of course)
Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog – Soundtrack
The Dark Knight Rises – Original Music Score
Flash Gordon Original Soundtrack
The beach boys
Final Fantasy VII – Voices of the Lifestream – All 4 Albums
Alien podcasts
Music from "The Hobbit" Trailer 2012
"Back in Time" (for Men in black 3)
Daft Punk
Kaskade – Dynasty 2010
Final Fantasy Distant Worlds II
Arcade Fire



Can you guess
which editor likes
which music?!

You can check out this totally random playlist and some other music your editors really like Sparklezilla by visiting Pandora.com **EMAIL sparklezillamagazine@gmail.com**
Password SZreader

Feel free to add your own music to the playlist too!!



**See you next
time!**

Same magazine.

Same blog.

**All submissions to Sparklezilla can be sent to:
sparklezillamagazine@gmail.com**

**Questions, comments, and inquiries
about our contributors can be
directed to that email also.**

**SPaRkLEziLLa readers
are AWESOME.**